

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY China  
 SUBJECT Recruiting Procedure, East China

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1. By the end of January 1951, land reform in the East China Area was well advanced and the authorities turned their attention elsewhere. A three months' campaign was initiated to recruit volunteers for the Chinese Communist Army (CAA).
2. In addition to the normal militia ("armed civilians"), volunteers were energetically sought for the regular army, especially among poor farmers whose new holding of land after the redistribution was still inadequate to maintain all the sons of the family.
3. Volunteers between 18 and 35 were called for, but younger boys down to 15 years of age were accepted if their physique was good enough.
4. The children of rich farmers and landowners (either former or surviving) were not accepted, even if they volunteered. Most volunteers came from poor families.
5. By 30 April, 140,000 volunteers were claimed from East China as a whole. Placings, judged on a population basis, were announced as follows:
  - 1st - South Kiangsu
  - 2nd - West Chekiang
  - 3rd - (tied) North Fukien and East Chekiang
  - last - North Kiangsu
6. Most villages supplied 15-20 volunteers. Those from Shanghai were generally better educated than the rest, many being middle school students.
7. The basic unit of the recruiting campaign was the administrative village, where the technique adopted was as follows:
  - a. All healthy young men of suitable age were listed and divided into groups, with a Communist cadre man responsible for each. His job was to rally his group to Resist America and Aid Korea meetings, the agenda of which he and his fellow cadres decided in advance. Volunteers were called for at the end of every such meeting.
  - b. At these meetings, the cadres would first get up and harangue the audience

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25X1A

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

- 2 -

about the benefits conferred by Land Reform, whereby the poor farmers, formerly destined to a life of poverty and enslavement, were now independent masters of the land. Then they stressed the gravity of the outlook in Korea, where the imperialists had started an aggressive war with the object not only of occupying the whole of Korea, but also of marching into Manchuria and restoring the Nationalists to power. If the Nationalists returned to the mainland (said the cadres) the farmers would again be dispossessed of their land and enslaved for life.

c. The audience were then asked whether they wanted to help the North Koreans to resist America and defend China, to which they naturally had to reply "Yes". Then volunteers were called for and every young man present who did not dare disclaim the intention was hailed as a volunteer. If any young man worth having declined to volunteer at these meetings, he was later singled out and "got at" by persuasion and moral pressure until he gave in.

8. Once one group in a village had secured some volunteers, it would challenge the next group to produce as many; a surprising number of volunteers were won in by these competitive methods.
9. The Communist "call for volunteers" thus proved more difficult to evade than the former Nationalist lottery system, from which one could always run away.
10. Each village had a quota to fill, and as soon as this was reached, or when it felt that no further volunteers could possibly be expected, the volunteers would be sent, with great pomp and circumstance, to the hsien city, and thence to the headquarters of the district government. Here they were well received, with sumptuous meals (plenty of meat and fish) and free comforts from various organizations and shops.
11. When the contingents from all the villages had assembled, they were given a feast, attended by all the military civil notabilities of the district. Then they were given a good send-off, for which the military and most of the population turned out, and the district political representative wore full dress and carried a red bouquet. Drummers' and folk-dance teams took part in the procession, the trade unions handed over "banners" and a good many firecrackers would be let off.
12. After the volunteers had departed, their families were fairly well cared for. In country districts, 200 catties of rice were raised by local contribution for the family of each volunteer; in Shanghai his factory usually gave the family a monthly cash allowance.
13. If the volunteer's family could not till the land he had left behind, a working party was formed from the young peasants who had not volunteered; and these were required to till the land and guarantee a certain yield, making up any shortage from their own produce.
14. If necessary the Women's Service Corps would arrange to do housework for the volunteers' families, and there were price reductions for them at most amusement shows. The families were entitled to put outside their front door a notice board saying "Glorious Family of volunteers" (光荣家属).

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